

130.
A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

OF THE REVEREND

MR. *THOMAS BRADBURY*,

Who departed this Life *Sept. 9. 1759.* in
the 82d Year of his Age :

PREACHED AT NEW-COURT

On LORD'S-DAY After-noon, *Sept. 16.*

And Published at the Request of the Church.

By *THOMAS HALL.* K

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, in *Pater-Noster-Row* ; T.
FIELD, in *Cheapside* ; E. DILLY, in the *Poultry* ;
and A. MASON, in *Fore-street.* M.DCC.LIX.

[Price Six-pence.]

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W. Musgrave.



ZECH. i. 5.

*Your Fathers, where are they? and
the Prophets, do they live for ever?*

A Good Understanding and deep Conviction of the *Mortality* of our present State is highly necessary, and many Ways very advantageous and useful. The Doctrine of it is frequently inculcated in the Word of God; and the Truth of it is daily confirmed in the Course of his Providence.

By the solemn Event which has given Occasion for the mournful Appearance of this Assembly, the LORD is calling us to a fresh and most serious Consideration of the Instructions contained in the Words of the *Text*, where in a very striking and awakening Manner we are taught these *Two Things*.

FIRST, That we are *All mortal*. This is plainly suggested by the *Query* in the former Part of the Verse.

SECONDLY, That no excellent *Disposition* or *Qualifications* can exempt any Man from the Stroke of *Death*. This is as plainly suggested by the *Query* in the latter Part of the Verse.

And these are the *Two general Points* I shall endeavour now to insist upon, as the *LORD* shall help me.

FIRST, I shall take Notice of the *general Mortality* of our present State.

When the *Question* in the *Text* was put to the *Israelites*, *Your Fathers, where are they?* the Design of it was, to remind them that they were *All mortal*, or to quicken their Attention to the Subject of the *general Mortality* of our Nature.

The Answer to this *Query* was so very obvious, that the Matter required no long Time for Consideration. They could easily reply, that *their Fathers* had been *carried away as with a Flood (a)*: Though they were not

(a) P^{sal}. xc. 5.

not immediately carried from the Womb to the Grave, yet their Days were few (b) ; and swifter than a Post, they passed away as the swift Ships (c), which sailing before a strong Gale are quickly out of sight ; and the Eyes of those that had seen them, could see them here no more ; for they were not (d), but were gone the Way of all the Earth (e), and entered into the Land of Darkneſs in the Grave, from whence they were not to return (f) ; for when a Man dies, it is not deſigned that he ſhould live again (g).

In our Meditation upon this Subject of Mortality, to which both the Word and Providence of GOD now direct us, it is fit our Thoughts ſhould be employed in a ſerious and humbling Reflexion upon the following Heads, viz.

1. Upon the *original Source* and Spring of our Mortality.

2. Upon the *Extent* of it : And,

3. Upon the *Reason* of that Extent.

Let us conſider,

1. The *original Source* and Spring of our Mortality, which was Sin.

Such

(b) Job x. 19, 20.

(c) Job ix. 25, 26.

(d) Job vii. 8.

(e) 1 Kings ii. 2.

(f) Job x. 21.

(g) Job xiv. 14.

Such was the Perfection of our Nature at the *first Creation* of Man, and during his State of *Innocency*, that *Death had no Dominion over him*; and since Death was *threatned* only in Case of *Transgression*, we have reason to conclude, that if a due Obedience had been performed to the Will of G O D, Man would have enjoyed an endless Life. And if the *Promise of Life* at first was *not explicitly given*, it was because there was no Occasion for it, as being strongly implied in the conditional Threatning.

Yet when *the Righteousness of the Law* is spoken of in Scripture, we are taught, that *if Man had done the Things* which G O D had enjoined him, *he should have lived by them* (b). For since *Death* was to be inflicted as *the Punishment of Disobedience*, it follows, that if Man had *not offended*, he had *not died*, and if he *had not died*, he must *have lived for ever*; for an endless Duration was stamped upon his very Frame and Constitution, by his Almighty and bountiful Creator.

But *Death* being *the Wages of Sin* (i), no sooner did *Sin enter into the World* (k), but
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(b) Rom. x. 5.

(i) Rom. vi. 23.

(k) Rom. v. 12.

an unavoidable *Liableness* to the Execution of the Sentence of *Death* immediately followed. So that we see, that the *original Source* and Spring of our *Mortality* was *Sin*.

Let us consider in the next place,

2. The *Extent* of our *Mortality*.

And this appears to be large and wide indeed ; so wide and *universal*, that it is of *equal Extent with our Nature* ; for no Man who has been born in the ordinary Way, but was born under a *Liableness* and Subjection to *Death*.

If we consider seriously, *where our Fathers are*, we shall see reason to acknowledge, that the *Sentence of Death* affected, not *Adam* only, but *his whole Posterity* likewise. The *Query* in the *Text* here puts us upon thinking, not merely *Where is our first Father Adam?* but *Where are all our intermediate Fathers*, such as *Noah, Shem, Ham, or Japhet?* Where are *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?* Where are *David and Solomon*, and *all the Ancestors*, whether of the *Jewish* or *Gentile Race?*

What was said of *all the antediluvian Patriarchs*, *Enoch* only excepted, must be said
of

of *all our Fathers* who lived in any succeeding Generation, *They died*. And though in a single Instance or two, GOD has heretofore shewn his Sovereignty, in *translating them*, and not suffering them *to see Death*; and though as to those, who shall be *alive at Christ's second coming*, it is declared, that *they shall all be changed, but shall not all sleep the Sleep of Death* (l); yet as to all intervening Generations, *as sure as Men are born*, it is no less sure *they shall die*.

On the whole, it is incontestably evident from the Departure and Death of *our Fathers*, that when GOD said to *Adam*, *Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return* (m), we were all comprehended and included in that Sentence. The *Apostle* therefore insists upon it in general Terms, that *it is appointed unto Men once to die* (n); or it was *once*, and at one and the same Time, *appointed unto Men to die*, that is, *unto all Men* absolutely and universally considered.

And now let us consider,

3. The *Reason* of the universal Extent of this Appointment.

And

(l) 1 Cor. xv. 51.

(m) Gen. iii. 19.

(n) Heb. ix. 27.

And this was, *because all have sinned*; as the *Apostle* declares, *Rom. v. 12.* Where we may observe, that the *Greek Words* [$\epsilon\phi'$ ξ] will admit of being *translated* two different Ways; yet in which ever of those Ways they shall be taken, they plainly suggest the *Reason*, why *Death passed upon all Men.* If the Words be taken *absolutely*, then they expressly and precisely specify the *Reason*, why *Death passed upon all Men*; it is, *for that*, or *because all have sinned*: Or if the Words be taken *relatively*, and be rendered *in whom*, (as they are in the *Margin*,) then as they point out the *Reason*, why *Death passed upon all Men*, they shew us likewise the *Foundation* or *Reason*, why *all Men* are accounted *Sinners*; even *because they sinned with*, and *in*, that *one Man*, by whom *Sin and Death* first entered into the *World.* And since *all Men* were *Parties* jointly concerned with *Adam* in the Breach of the *first Covenant*, it was but fit, that *the Sentence* which was *passed upon him*, should be extended to all that became guilty with him.

Should it be asked, How it came to pass, that *we*, and *all Men* became guilty with *Adam* in his *first Transgression*? the Answer is, *Because* by the wise and righte-

ous Appointment of G O D *Adam* our natural Head, and common Parent, was constituted our federal Head and Representative.

Now as what is done by a legal Representative is ever deemed in Law and Justice, to be done by the Person or Persons that are represented: So in the Eye of the Law, *Adam's Transgression* was *our's*; and for this Reason, the same Sentence which the Law passed upon him, it also passed upon us, and all that were represented by him. And whoever rightly believe, that *Adam* was the Figure of *Christ* (o), in being the publick Head of his natural Family, as *Christ* is the publick Head of his spiritual Family the Church, they cannot but acknowledge, that the Judgment of the Law herein was true and righteous; however Men of perverse Minds may argue against it, pretending it would be an unrighteous Proceeding, if by one Man's Disobedience others should be made Sinners, though this is clearly asserted by the inspired Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans (p).

But instead of objecting, disputing, or cavilling against this Truth, so plainly declared in the Word of G O D, let us plead, that we may be humbled under our Experience, that
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(o) Rom. v. 14.

(p) Rom. v. 19.

the Punishment of the grand Apostacy, contained in that *Threatning of Mortality*, is *come upon ourselves*. And this being an undeniable Evidence, that *We were concerned* in that Apostacy, let the Consideration hereof engage us to *mourn* under the Remembrance of the *original Sin and Guilt*, which attended us at our very Birth, or as soon as we became Partakers of the Human Nature.

Thus we see, that in our Meditations upon our *Mortality* we ought to remember these *three Things*; namely,—That the *original Source* of it was *Sin*;—That the *Sentence* which doomed our Nature to *this Mortality*, was of an *universal Extent*; and—That the *Reason* of this Extent was, *because all the Human Race* have *sinned in Adam*, their *Covenant-Head* and publick *Representative*.

Having thus considered the *Mortality* of our present State, I shall now pass on to the *Second General*; under which I am to shew,

SECONDLY, That no excellent *Disposition* or *Qualifications* can exempt any *One* of the Apostate Race of *Adam* from the *Stroke of Death*.

Thus much is plainly intimated by the *Query* in the latter Part of the Text, *And the Prophets, do they live for ever?* The Mode of Expression in which the Question is formed, sufficiently shews, that if a just *Answer* be given to it, it must be *in the Negative*: For in other Cases, it is common to put the Question *in the Affirmative*, when it is intended that *the Negative* should be most strongly maintained. Thus, *If a Man die, shall he live again (q)?* No assuredly, *he shall not*: So here, *Do the Prophets live for ever?* It is most certain, *They do not*. Had the *Question* been clothed with a *negative Form*, after this manner, *Do not the Prophets die?* the Answer must have been *in the Affirmative*, Yes, *They certainly die*.

And since this is so manifestly the Case as to *the Prophets* themselves, we may hence justly conclude, That *no Excellency or Dignity* of any other Men *can exempt them from dying*.

Here let me give you *first*, a brief *Illustration* of this Point; and *then* shew you, what *Use* or *Improvement* should be made of these Truths, in a Way of *Application*.

As

As to the *Illustration* of the Point, I shall instance in a few Particulars : And you will easily perceive, That *no Man* shall be *exempted from dying*,

1. Upon Account of the *Dignity* of any *honourable Office* which he bears.

The true *Prophets of the Lord* were *highly dignified* : And by *the Prophets* here referred to, we are without Doubt to understand, those *extraordinary Ministers*, whom God *raised up* and ordained under the *Old Testament* Dispensation, to reveal his Counsels, to carry his Messages, and deliver his Commands to his Church and People. Such were *Moses* and *Aaron* : Such were *Samuel*, *David*, *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, and others. And as these were in their Office *Types of Christ*, the great Prophet of the Church, there was a *Dignity* attending them, which beyond all Comparison was *superior* to the *highest Dignity* that could be conferred by the greatest of *earthly Princes* ; yea, *superior* to the *highest Dignity* sustained by those *Monarchs* themselves.—But though these *to whom the Word of God came*, and who were employed *to speak to the People in the Name of the Lord*, were termed *Gods* (r), in the like Sense as *Moses* was,

(r) John x. 35.

was (s), yet notwithstanding they were *called Gods*, they *died like Men* (t).

No meer Man had *a higher Trust* than *Moses*, no One *a higher Honour* than *Aaron the Saint of the Lord* (u); yet it was the Divine Pleasure and Command concerning Both, that they *should die and be gathered to their People* (x), as were the rest of the *Israelites*, or those who had *the lowest Station* in the House of God. Neither shall any Man *be exempted from dying* upon Account of the *Dignity* of the Office which he bears, whether in the *Civil Community*, or in the *Church of God*. — Nor shall any Man be *exempted from Death*,

2. Upon Account of the *Nearness* of any *Spiritual* or *New-Covenant Relation* in which he stands to God.

Besides the *Ecclesiastical Relation* to God, which was founded upon the *Divine Institution* of any Office, the holy *Prophets* and *all the Saints* had a *near Relation* to God, founded upon the *Covenant of Grace*. According to the new and everlasting *Covenant*, which God has made *with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*, He becomes *their*
GOD,

(s) Exod. vii. 1.

(u) Psal. cvi. 16.

(t) Psal. lxxxii. 6, 7.

(x) Deut. xxxii. 50.

GOD, and they are made *his People* (y): And whoever are brought within the Bonds of *this Covenant*, they are admitted into a *peculiar Relation* to GOD, which carries in it *all the Nearness* that can be conceived to subsist between GOD and Man: For such are not only *his Servants*, and *his Friends*, but *his Children*, and this both by Regeneration and Adoption: Yea, GOD is not only *their Master*, and *their Father*, but he is *their Husband*. And this *New-Covenant Relation* between GOD and his People *can never be dissolved*; for they who are *once the Lord's*, are *ever his*, and *he hates putting away* (z). They therefore who are *once taken* into the *Family and House* of GOD, shall *never be cast out*, but shall *abide therein for ever* (a): Yet *the Night* is coming on, when *the Children of GOD* themselves *must be unclothed*, and after they have *spent the Day* in *serving their own Generation by the Will of GOD*, they *must fall asleep*, as *David* did (b).

For when our LORD declared, That *if a Man* believe on him, and *keep his Saying*, he *shall never see Death* (c), the Privilege there promised by him was not an *Exemption* from *dying the natural Death*, but a *Blessing* of much

(y) Jer. xxxi. 31, 33.

(z) Mal. ii. 16.

(a) John viii. 35. (b) Acts xiii. 36. (c) John viii. 51.

much greater Importance, and infinitely more valuable than that would have been, even an absolute *Security* from being *burt of the Second Death*.

The *Promise* therefore, that his Disciples *should not see Death*, meant the same, as when it is said, that *whosoever believeth in him, shall never perish (d)* : And though every Believer, on Account of the Change of his Spiritual State, may justly be said to be already *passed from Death unto Life (e)* ; yet it is no where promised them, notwithstanding the *Nearness* of their *Spiritual Relation* to God, that *the Life which they now live in the Flesh shall never end* ; for as *the Prophets* of old *did not*, so neither is there any Warrant to expect, that any of *the dear Children* of God in the present Time *shall live here for ever*. — Nor can a Man be *exempted from dying*,

3. Upon Account of any present *high Attainments* in Grace or Holiness.

We have reason to believe, that among *the Prophets* here spoken of, those *Holy Men* of God were included, who were not only favoured with *the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation (f)* that *the Eyes of their Understandings*

(d) John iii. 16. (e) John v. 24. (f) Eph. i. 17, 18.

ings being enlightened, they might know the great Things of God's Law, and the peculiar Doctrines of Divine Revelation ; but whose Privilege also it was, to have their Hearts and Consciences powerfully impressed by the special and efficacious Operations, and by the renewing and sanctifying Influences of the Holy Ghost, whereby they were born again, and created anew unto good Works (g) : And thus their Hearts were right with GOD (h), and they became truly desirous to walk in his Ways, and were made conscientiously careful to be stedfast in his Covenant.

They believed in GOD, and trusted in his Salvation (i) ; they were of an excellent Spirit (k), and walked with GOD (l) : And whatever Afflictions, Trials, or Opposition, they met with in the Way, yet they did not forget his Statutes, but esteemed all his Precepts concerning all Things to be right, and hated every false Way (m) ; and were enabled every one through Grace to keep himself from his own Iniquity (n). Their Meditation of GOD was sweet (o), and in the Multitude of their Thoughts within them, his Comforts did delight their Souls (p) ; and his Word did they bide in their Hearts, that they might not sin against him

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(g) Eph. ii. 10. (h) Psal. lxxviii. 37. (i) Psal. lxxviii. 22.
 (k) Prov. xvii. 27. (l) Gen. vi. 9. (m) Psal. cxix. 83, 128.
 (n) Psal. xviii. 23. (o) Psal. civ. 34. (p) Psal. xciv. 19.

him (q). Thus were they made wise unto Salvation : They understood the Fear of the LORD, and found the Knowledge of GOD (r); and their prevailing Aim was to keep the Way of Righteousness, Judgment, and Equity, yea, every good Path (s).

But however their *high Attainments* in Grace and Holiness might be encouraged, by GOD's *revealing to them the Abundance of Peace and Truth*, and *causing them to hear the Voice of Joy and Gladness (t)*, yet the *highest Degrees* of their real Sanctity and true Holiness could not prevent *their being unclothed*; but for how long a Day soever *their Conversation* had been in *Heaven (u)*, yet the *Night* came, when they were obliged to have *their Lodging* in the Grave.

And as it was in *Solomon's Days*, so it is now, and so it will be to the last Age of the World, *As dieth the Fool*, that is, the wicked Man, *the Sinner*, so too as certainly *must the Wise die (x)*, how religious and pious, how gracious and holy soever they have been.—
Nay further,

4. No Man can be *exempted from dying*, how faithfully *Zealous*, or remarkably *Active* soever,

(q) Pſal. cxix. 11.

(r) Prov. ii. 5.

(s) Prov. ii. 8, 9.

(t) Jer. xxxiii. 6, 11.

(u) Phil. iii. 20.

(x) Eccl. ii. 16.

soever, he has been in the Cause of *Christ*, and for the Glory of his Name.

It must be allowed, that *the holy Prophets* of old *had a Zeal for God*, and it was *a Zeal according to Knowledge* (y). They were careful to *stand in God's Counsel* (z), and to *preach the Preaching which he bade them* (a). The *Words* which the *LORD spake unto them*, they *heard with their Ears*, and *received them in their Heart* : They were *valiant for the Truth* (b), and had so strict a Regard unto the *Divine Authority*, and so high a Reverence for *God*, that they did not dare to mix *their own Notions* with his Revelation, nor *Men's Inventions* with his Institutions. What *God commanded*, that *they did* ; what He *prohibited*, from that *they abstained* ; and what they *received from the Lord*, that *they delivered to the People*, without adding to, or diminishing from it.

They did not *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men* (c) ; but they *spake the Truth in Love* (d) : And in *their Doctrine* they *shewed Uncorruptness, Gravity, and Sincerity*, using *sound Speech that could not be condemned* (e). Nor did they *hold the Truth*

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(y) Rom. x. 2.

(z) Jer. xxiii. 22.

(a) Jen. iii. 2.

(b) Jer. ix. 3.

(c) Mat. xv. 9.

(d) Eph. iv. 15.

(e) Tit. ii. 7, 8.

in Unrighteousness (f); but in their Practice shewed themselves Patterns of good Works (g), being raised above the Influence of all Court-Flattery, and watching against the Snares that were laid for them, by any Offers of high Preferment, or worldly Emoluments. Their Care was to preach as pleasing God, whether Men were pleased or not (h).

They were *not terrified* by the Threatnings of *their Adversaries (i)*, but shewed that they were *not afraid of Bonds or Imprisonment*; and when *they were stoned, and had Trials of cruel Mockings and Scourgings (k)*, they were *not moved by any of these Things (l)*, but still *persevered in the Course of their Ministry*, zealously bearing a faithful Testimony for God. For even *in their Days*, (as in Ours,) there were Men of a *Pharisaick Temper*, who under a Pretence of *searching after Truth*, set themselves *against the great Things* that could only be known by a divine and supernatural *Revelation*: And these Persons *greatly withstood the Words* of the holy Men of God (*m*); and though they could not always *raise a Persecution*, and *shed the Blood of the holy Prophets* at pleasure, as they did that of *Zacharias (n)*, yet they al-
ways

(f) Rom. i. 18. (g) Tit. ii. 7. (h) 1 Theff. ii. 4.

(i) Phil. i. 28. (k) Heb. xi. 36, 37. (l) Acts xx. 24.

(m) 2 Tim. iv. 15. (n) Mat. xxiii. 35.

ways treated them with a *sovereign Contempt* ; and where they had not Front enough to *tax them as weak Bablers* (o), they were yet so wicked as to *condemn them* as Furies and Mad-men ; and the most *faithful Preaching* was run down as *Enthusiasm*, and exclaimed against as being *too mystical*, because it was truly divine and spiritual.

Thus *Ezekiel* lamented his Case, when he said, *Ab, LORD GOD ! they say of me, Doth he not speak Parables* (p) ? that is, in the modern Language of our Day, *Doth he not talk mystically and enthusiastically ?* But the LORD made the Face of his Servants strong against the Face of their Enemies (q), and they went on in their Work with Pleasure and Joy, being zealously affected always in a good Thing (r), till their Course was finished ; yet at last there was Occasion to say, not only of One or Two, or of a few of them, but it is recorded of *them all*, that *they died*.

Notwithstanding *their Zeal* in spreading the good Report which they had obtained or received, yet *their most fervent Zeal* could not prevail, that they should be always continued in Life, and not die.—Once more, I would observe,

5. That

(o) Acts xvii. 18.

(p) Ezek. xx. 49.

(q) Ezek. iii. 8.

(r) Gal. iv. 18.

5. That a Man cannot be *exempted from Death*, upon Account of the greatest *Success and Usefulness* in the Cause of God.

There is *a vast Variety* as to the Gifts and Talents, as to the Capacities and Opportunities, with which the LORD *intrusts Men*, that they may be *useful in their Day*. To some he gives *great Skill* in the Affairs of *Government*, and a clear *Understanding of the Times* (s): These are fitted to *advise and direct* what a People ought to do, for their own Safety, Welfare, and Prosperity, whether in a Time of *Peace or War*. To some the LORD gives *a large Portion of earthly Treasure*, that they may have it in their Power to *relieve the Neccessitous*, and to do much Good by *communicating to the Poor*.

Others are still more highly favoured with singular *Abilities*, and gracious *Qualifications* for the *Prophetical Office*, that they more especially may be made of *Service to the Souls of Men*. And some of these have been remarkably *assisted, strengthened, and succeeded*, so that they have been, in the Hand of the SPIRIT, *the happy Instruments* of instructing and enlightening many, and of *turning many unto Righteousness* (t). And with Respect
to

(s) 1 Chron. xii. 32.

(t) Dan. xii. 3.

to these, Believers have been apt to think, *it was needful* that such should *abide in the Flesh* (*u*) for publick Service to spiritual Purposes.

But though they were *burning and shining Lights* (*x*), Men *full of the Holy Ghost and of heavenly Wisdom* (*y*); though they were *mighty in the Scriptures* (*z*), and *apt to teach* (*a*); though they were enabled *so to speak, that many believed*; yet their Life quickly came to a Period, and *they died*.

The Remarks I have thus made, I humbly conceive, are a sufficient *Illustration* of the Point I have been insisting on, (*viz.*) That *no Excellencies, Privileges, or Advantages, which attend any of our Mortal Race, can exempt them from the Stroke of Death.*—Neither the *Dignity* of any *Office* they bear,—neither the *Nearness* of their *Spiritual Relation* to God,—nor the *Height* of their *Attainments* in Grace and Holiness;—neither their *Zeal* for the Honour of the Redeemer,—nor their *Usefulness in Life*, can prevent their Departure.

And with Regard to that *venerable Father*, the late worthy *Pastor* of this Church, whose
Funeral

(*u*) Phil. i. 24.

(*x*) John v. 35.

(*y*) Acts vi. 5.

(*z*) Acts xviii. 24.

(*a*) 2 Tim. ii. 24.

Funeral was Yesterday so publickly solemnized, and whose *Death* is this Day very sorely lamented by us, I may leave it to you, *my sorrowful Friends*, who best knew him, and were most intimately acquainted with his exemplary Piety, his Fervour and Zeal in the Cause of Religion and Truth, his extraordinary Readiness in the Scriptures which appeared in all his Discourses, and his Usefulness in the Ministry of the Gospel; *to You*, I say, I may leave it to judge, whether *in his Departure* the LORD has not given us *a fresh Proof*, that whatever be the excellent *Endowments*, the happy and gracious *Qualifications* of his Servants *the Prophets*, even of the *most renowned* of them, yet *they do not live for ever*.

But instead of enlarging here upon the *Character of the Deceased*, I shall endeavour now to offer you a few *Inferences* by Way of *APPLICATION*, which may be for the *Quickning* and *Edification of the Living*, rather than seek to give *any high Encomium upon the Dead*.

Let me then desire you to attend to the following just, serious, and necessary *Reflections*: And may *the Spirit of the Lord* make them truly useful to us all!

[1.] Does

[1.] Does the Removal of *our Fathers* plainly shew us *our own Mortality*, and make it evident that *We likewise must quickly depart*, let then the Consideration of this engage us to be *diligent in our Preparation* for the awful approaching Change.

CHRIST is now saying to Us, both by his Word and Providence, *Be ye also ready (b)*. And here let us remember, that there can be *no Readiness for Death*, unless we are *born again, renewed in the Spirit of our Mind*, and *made New Creatures*; unless we are *espoused to Christ, joined to the Lord*, and by his SPIRIT *quicken'd and rais'd into a vital Union with Him*, and thus wrought into a *Conformity and Likeness to Him*, and led into a *Communion and Fellowship with Him*.

Unless *His Righteousness* be *put upon Us*, *imputed to Us*, and *received by Us*, in the Actings and Exercise of a *Faith unfeigned*, as a *Gift* of the most free, sovereign, rich and heavenly *Grace*; unless *that Righteousness* be *depended upon*, as the *only Ground* of our Confidence and Hope in God for Acceptance with Him; there can be *no due Preparedness for Death*. They that *have not believed in*

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the Son of GOD, *nor trusted in his Salvation* (c), what can they expect, but that *when they die* they shall find GOD to be *their Enemy*, and to be *wroth with them* for their provoking Disobedience and Rebellion against Him : And such as fall under *the wrathful Displeasure of GOD*, *must be destroyed*. Let these Considerations quicken us to *prepare for Death*. And,

[2.] Since we *cannot live for ever*, and know not *how soon we may die*, let us *watch against any further Delay* in Matters of the utmost Importance.

Except we repent, we must *All perish* (d) : And it will be *dreadful indeed* for those who have had *the long Space for Repentance* given them, which has been given even to the youngest in this Assembly that is grown up to a Capacity for Self-Reflection ; it will be *dreadful*, I say, for such to be cut off and *snatched away by Death*, before they have repented.

While we are *spared*, let us study the Nature, Duty, and Necessity of a truly *Evangelical* Repentance : And under a Conviction, that whatever Warnings, Instructions, or
Calls

(c) Psa. lxxviii. 22.

(d) Luk. xiii. 5.

Calls to Repentance are given us by the Word and Providence of GOD, yet we shall *never repent* nor *return*, if the LORD does not *turn us*, and if He who is *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour*, does not give us the Grace of *Repentance* (e); under a Conviction, that without this we shall *never repent*, let us be *much in Prayer* for the *Spirit of Christ*, that he may *take away the Heart of Stone*, and give us an *Heart of Flesh* (f), that he will be graciously pleased to *put his Law in our inward Parts*, and *write it in our Hearts* (g); for till this Mercy is granted us, we *cannot turn to the LORD*, nor be delivered from an accusing, condemning, and self-tormenting Conscience. But,

[3.] Do not *the Prophets live for ever*, then *their Ministry* should be *carefully improved* by a People, while it is mercifully continued among them.

What our LORD said to the *Jews* concerning *his own Ministry*, is in a proper Sense applicable to the Case of *any People*, who are favoured with the Preaching of *his faithful Ministers*; that yet *a little while the Light is*

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(e) Acts v. 31. (f) Ezek. xxxvi. 26. (g) Jer. xxxi. 33.

with them (b). It becomes us all therefore, while we have the Light, to believe in the Light (i) ; that is, while we have the Light of the Word, we are to believe in that Saviour who is the Light of the World (k) whom the Word reveals.

As to your late Pastor, you will see his Face in the Flesh, and hear his Voice no more. It is your Mercy indeed, to have still a Prophet among you : Yet remember, that no present Advantages as to his Years, his bodily Strength or Vigour, can be any Security for his being long continued, how greatly soever this Blessing is to be desired. But whilst he is spared, let every One of this Church and Congregation pray and watch, that there may not be a sad Occasion for the like Complaint against any, that was made against the Hearers of the Prophet Ezekiel, They seemed zealous and forward to attend his Ministry, but when they heard his Words, they would not do them (l).

Plead, that the Ministry which the LORD has so seasonably sent you, may not be to you merely as the lovely Song of one that has a pleasant Voice ; but watch and pray, that through the special Blessing of the LORD it may

(b) John xii. 35.

(i) John xii. 36.

(k) John viii. 12.

(l) Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

may be *the Power of God unto the Salvation* of your Souls (*m*), and may thus be *not the Savour of Death unto Death*, but *the Savour of Life unto Life* (*n*), unto the Glory of his Name. Again,

[4.] Is it plain, that *the Prophets do not live for ever*, how *thankful* then should we be for a *Succession of Prophets and faithful Ministers* ?

The LORD, in his infinite Wisdom and sovereign Pleasure, has ordained that *Men of mortal Infirmary* should be employed in the *Service of the Sanctuary*, and they are *not suffered to continue by Reason of Death* (*o*). How kind and tender then is it in CHRIST, *the Head of the Church*, that He takes Care for a *Succession* ? That though *Ministers die*, yet the *Office and Work of the Ministry shall not cease* ; and though *all Flesh be as Grass*, and the *most honourable and renowned among Men be as the Flower of the Grass* ; though *the Grass withereth, and the Flower thereof falleth away*, yet *the Word of the Lord, and the Ministry thereof, still endureth*, and shall endure *to the End* (*p*). He that

(*m*) Rom. i. 16.

(*n*) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

(*o*) Heb. vii. 23.

(*p*) 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

that removed *Elijah*, presently raised up an *Elisha* to be his *Successor*.

May we not justly remark, that as in God's *Promise* to give the *Land of Canaan* to *Abraham's Seed*, there was included a *Promise* that he would give a *Seed* to *Abraham* (q); in like Manner, when *CHRIST* promised, that he would be with his *Ministers* alway, did not this imply, that there should be always a *Succession* of *Ministers*, even to the *End of the World* (r)? And when it is said, the *Word of the Lord* endureth for ever, what follows is a plain Intimation, that the *Gospel* shall be preached for ever; for it is said, *This is the Word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you* (s).

I now come to the *last Inference* I shall make from the Subject, viz.

[5.] Since all ministerial *Prophets* must die, and have a Period put to their Usefulness among us, with what *thankful Admiration* should we behold and acknowledge the transcendent and infinite *Excellency* of the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, the *great Prophet* and *universal Bishop* of the Church?

True,

(q) Gen. xiii. 15, 16. (r) Mat. xxviii. 20. (s) 1 Pet. i. 25.

True, He *died once* ; as the faithful Discharge of his *mediatorial Undertaking* made it necessary, that he should die *once for all* (t), that is, *Once and no more* : But though He *died*, He quickly *revived*, and is *now alive and liveth for evermore* (u) ; and with Respect to *all his Offices*, He is *the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever* (x), so that his *Prophetical Office* is as *unchangeable* as his *Priesthood* (y). And so long as any of his Disciples and Followers can *need Instruction*, He *lives* to communicate and impart it ; and *never could any teach like Him* (z). He causes his *Sheep* to *hear his Voice*, and teaches them so powerfully and effectually, that they become heartily willing and resolved to *follow Him* (a). He lives to *do that for his People*, which can never be done by any of his *Prophets or Ministers* ; for He gives them an *Understanding and an Heart to know the LORD* (b), even to *know Himself*, that He is *the true God, and eternal Life* (c).

But to draw to a *Conclusion*, Let the firm Belief and serious Consideration that *our Redeemer*

(t) Heb. x. 10.

(u) Rev. i. 18.

(x) Heb. xiii. 8.

(y) Heb. vii. 24.

(z) John vii. 46.

(a) John x. 27.

(b) Jer. xxiv. 7.

(c) 1 John v. 20.

Redeemer ever lives, serve to comfort the Hearts of this Church and Congregation under their present mourning Circumstances.

Pore not too much upon *the dark Side of the Cloud* ; for besides the grand Particulars I have already mentioned, there are some Things, though of less Weight, that have yet a Tendency to *alleviate your Grief*, and to prevent your *sorrowing over much*.——

Remember what Reason you have, to *sing of Mercy* as well as *Judgment* (d). It is Matter of *Thanksgiving and Praise*, (and I am persuaded you think it so,) that God has supplied you with an *agreeable Successor*, even *before the Demise* of his *aged Predecessor*.

——You well knew, that *the Deceased* could not live for ever : Nor was it to be *expected*, according to the common Course of Nature, that if *his Days* had been much farther prolonged, *his Capacity for publick Service* would have been of equal Duration. And as you had *Reason to expect*, so you have had *Time to prepare for*, this Event ; for God had *satisfied him with long Life* (e).—He had *fought a good Fight*, he kept the *Faith* (f), and has now *finished his Course with Joy* (g) ; and during the Time of his
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(d) Psal. ci. 1.

(e) Psal. xci. 16.

(f) 2 Tim. iv. 7.

(g) Acts xx. 24.

lingering Illness, he gave happy Evidence, that he was *waiting for his last Change* (b) with a fixed Confidence, that *the End of his Faith* would be *the Salvation of his Soul* (i). This appeared by the frequent *humble and thankful Declarations* he made, that *his God was with him*, and that he was *kept nigh unto his God*; and therefore had he *an assured Hope*, that at his Diffolution, *his Garments being made white in the Blood of the Lamb* (k), he should be *received into the heavenly Mansions*, to dwell in the immediate *Presence of God* where there is *Fulness of Joy*, and *at whose Right-Hand* (as he often solemnly declared, he firmly believed,) *there are Pleasures for evermore* (l).

Hence arose his fervent and daily Breathing, *Come Lord Jesus, come——*, and when he had Strength, he would add, *come quickly* (m); but of late through bodily Weakness his Speech so faltered, that he was not able to finish the Sentence so as to be heard.

And must it not give us a Pleasure to hear, that *his Exit* was *so triumphant and joyous*? Have we not all Reason to be *thankful*, that he was *spared so long*? as in

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(b) Job. xiv. 14.

(i) 1 Pet. i. 9.

(k) Rev. vii. 14.

(l) Psal. xvi. 11.

(m) Rev. xxii. 20.

our Times there are but few, *very few Instances* to be named, of *a Minister's being continued* in the Labours of the Gospel, and with such little Interruption by Sickneſs, *for ſo many Years*, as He was, even from his *Eighteenth* to the *Eighty-second* Year of his Age. And from the Beginning to the laſt Period of his Miniſtry, *his Life* was juſtly eſteemed as *a great Bleſſing* upon various Accounts, to many *Churches* and *Saints*, both in City and Country.

And we ought to reflect upon it with *Thankfulneſs*, that as his *Furniture* and *Abilities* for the miniſterial Work were great, and *his Popularity* in Preaching uncommon ; ſo *his Miniſtry*, not only in *his own Congregation*, but in ſeveral of *the moſt publick Lectures* in this City, was in various Inſtances crowned with ſome *remarkable Succeſſes*.

Nor was *his Uſefulneſs* confined to the *Pulpit*, but he frequently employed *the Preſs* to the beſt Purpoſes ; and *his good Underſtanding* in the *Mysteries of the Gospel*, his *Faithfulneſs* and *Zeal* in contending for the *Faith* once delivered to the *Saints* (n), his *Capacity*, *Steadineſs*, and *Valour* in defending the *Cauſe of Religion* and *Liberty*, were
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(n) Jude, ver. 3.

manifestly discovered in the *useful Pieces* which he published *against the Enemies of God and their Country*, who have endeavoured to revive and propagate the *destructive Notions* of the *Arians* and *Pelagians*, and the *enslaving Doctrines* of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*.

However, as we have heard *no Zeal or Usefulness*, whether in preaching or defending the Gospel, *can perpetuate the Life* of the *most able or faithful Ministers*: But happy for us, we have this *to comfort us* under the *Mortality of Ministers*, that the *great Prophet* of the Church *liveth and abideth for ever*: And as He *will direct his Work in Truth* (o), so wherever He *has begun a good Work* in the Hearts of any, He *will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ* (p), and will take Care to *perfect that which is lacking in our Faith* (q).

And All that *have heard CHRIST*, and *have been taught by him* (r), and thus have been enabled to *commit themselves* to his Protection, They shall be *kept by his mighty Power through Faith unto compleat and eternal Salvation* (s); and then we shall constantly

(o) Isai. lxi. 8.

(p) Phil. i. 6.

(q) 1 Theff. iii. 10.

(r) Eph. iv. 21.

(s) 1 Pet. i. 5.

stantly with our whole Hearts acknowledge, that whatever have been the *grieving Events* of Time, yet our LORD ever *did all Things well* (t).

Let our *Trust* therefore be in Him; for *worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive* the highest Ascriptions of *Power and Riches, of Wisdom and Strength* (u): To Him therefore be *Honour, and Glory, and Blessing, World without End. Amen.*

(t) Mark vii. 37.

(u) Rev. v. 12.

F I N I S.

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